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THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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Background

The United States has carried on intelligence activities since the days of George Washington, but only since World War II have they been systematized on a government-wide basis.

The organization first formed for this purpose was authorized in a letter-directive dated 22 January 1946, in which President Harry S. Truman instructed the Secretary of State (James F. Byrnes), the Secretary of War (Robert P. Patterson), the Secretary of the Navy (James V. Forrestal), and his own personal representative (Admiral William D. Leahy), to constitute themselves as the "National Intelligence Authority." The Authority was directed to plan, develop, and coordinate "all Federal foreign intelligence activities" in order to "assure the most effective accomplishment of the intelligence mission related to the national security." The members of the Authority assigned persons and funds from their departments to form the "Central Intelligence Group," which was the operating body for the NIA. The "Group" was headed by a "Director of Central Intelligence" appointed by the President.

The National Intelligence Authority (NIA) and its operating component, the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), were in existence for twenty months in 1946 and 1947. Under the terms of the National Security Act of 1947 (which became effective on 18 September 1947), they were superseded by the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Mission and Functions

The responsibilities of the CIA derive from two acts of Congress — the National Security Act of 1947 (Public Law 253, 26 July 1947), as amended; and the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (Public Law 110, 20 June 1949), as amended. Section 102 (d) of the National Security Act states:

“For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security, it shall be the duty of the [Central Intelligence] Agency, under the direction of the National Security Council —

“(1) to advise the National Security Council in matters concerning such intelligence activities of the Government departments and agencies as relate to national security;

“(2) to make recommendations to the National Security Council for the coordination of such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security;

“(3) to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security, and provide for the appropriate dissemination of such intelligence within the Government using where appropriate existing agencies and facilities: *Provided*, That the Agency shall have no police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers, or internal-security functions: *Provided* further, That the departments and other agencies of the Government shall continue to collect, evaluate, correlate and disseminate departmental intelligence: *And Provided further*, That the Director of Central Intelligence shall be responsible for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure;

“(4) to perform, for the benefit of the existing intelligence agencies, such additional services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more efficiently accomplished centrally;

“(5) to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct.”

The National Security Act, as amended, specifies that both the Director of Central Intelligence and the Deputy Director shall be appointed by the President, subject to confirmation by the U.S.

Senate. An amendment of 4 April 1953 authorized such appointments to be made either from individuals in civilian life or from commissioned officers of the armed services, whether in active or retired status, provided that "at no time shall the two positions . . . be occupied simultaneously by commissioned officers. . . ."

The Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (Public Law 110, 20 June 1949) supplemented the National Security Act with respect to the Central Intelligence Agency as follows:

(1) exempted the Agency, in the interest of "the security of foreign intelligence activities of the United States," from such existing Federal laws as require "the publication or disclosure of the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries, or numbers of personnel employed by the Agency";

(2) specified that the appropriations or other moneys made available to the Agency "may be expended without regard to the provisions of law and regulations relating to the expenditure of Government funds"; and that "for objects of a confidential, extraordinary, or emergency nature, such expenditures to be accounted for solely on the certificate of the Director, and every such certificate shall be deemed a sufficient voucher for the amount therein certified";

(3) permitted the Agency to negotiate purchases and contracts without advertising under certain conditions, such as for supplies or services the nature of which should not be publicly disclosed;

(4) permitted the Agency to transfer to and receive funds from other Government agencies, for activities authorized under the National Security Act, including the reimbursement to other agencies for personnel assigned or detailed to the Agency;

(5) permitted the Agency to contract for special research or instruction for Agency personnel at outside institutions;

(6) provided for special travel allowances and related expenses for Agency personnel assigned to duty outside the United States;

(7) granted the Director of Central Intelligence authority to approve the entry into the United States of certain aliens and their families, up to one hundred persons annually, subject to the determination (by the Director, the Attorney General, and the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization) that such entry is "in the interest of national security or essential to the furtherance of the national intelligence mission"; and

(8) by an amendment in 1951, authorized the Agency to employ up to fifteen retired officers of the Armed Services who have been retired for reasons other than physical disability, and provided that such officers could elect to receive either their retired pay or Agency compensation.

Under these acts of Congress, the Director of Central Intelligence serves as the principal adviser to the President and the National Security Council on all matters of intelligence related to the national security. CIA's responsibilities are carried out subject to various directives and controls by the President and the National Security Council.

Intelligence Coordination

As the Government's principal intelligence officer, the Director of Central Intelligence is responsible for coordinating the foreign intelligence activities of the United States. He is Chairman of the United States Intelligence Board, which advises and assists him in this coordinating role. The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence is a member of the Board, representing the CIA. The other Board members are the heads of the intelligence organizations of the Department of State (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) and the Department of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency), plus representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Acting in consultation with the U.S. Intelligence Board, the Director of Central Intelligence makes recommendations to the National Security Council concerning the intelligence structure of the Government as a whole, to insure that each element is functioning properly in the national intelligence effort.

Similarly, after coordination with that Board, the Director presents to the National Security Council "National Intelligence Estimates," prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency, working with representatives of other governmental intelligence organizations and, at times, with cleared civilian experts. These estimates cover specific foreign situations of national security concern, or the world situation generally. They may embody a unanimous opinion, or may contain dissenting views by one or more of the participants.

By means of these coordinated estimates, along with related types of intelligence reports and evaluations, the Central Intelligence Agency exercises its responsibility to insure that the information going to the President and his principal advisers on foreign policy and national defense — the members of the National Security Council — is timely, consistent, and complete.

The Central Intelligence Agency neither duplicates nor rivals other intelligence organizations of the U.S. Government. It makes maximum use of the resources of these agencies.

Services of Common Concern

In addition to its coordination activities, the CIA provides various "services of common concern" to the U.S. intelligence organization generally. It conducts independent research in the fields of economic, geographic, and scientific intelligence, monitors foreign news and propaganda broadcasts, and collects information abroad. It also provides specialized reference and translation services, including mechanized data-processing facilities, to the various elements of the U.S. intelligence organization.

Policy on Public Disclosures

Because of the nature of its duties, required by law and by considerations of national security, the Central Intelligence Agency does not confirm or deny published reports, whether true or false, favorable or unfavorable to the Agency or its personnel. CIA does not publicly discuss its organization, its budget, or its personnel. Nor does it discuss its methods of operation or its sources of information.

Accountability

The Central Intelligence Agency is directly accountable to Presidential authority and control. This accountability is exercised notably through the National Security Council, which is privy to CIA's activities and programs generally; through the Bureau of the Budget, on fiscal and management matters; and by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

The Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board was established by President Kennedy on 4 May 1961. It represents a reactivation, with broadened terms of reference, of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, which had been established by President Eisenhower in 1956, in line with recommendations made in 1955 by the Hoover Commission.

The Board's functions, defined by Executive Order of 4 May 1961 are:

" . . . The function of the Board shall be to advise the President with respect to the objectives and conduct of the foreign intelligence and related activities of the United States which are required in the interests of foreign policy and national defense and security. . . . In the performance of its advisory duties, the Board shall conduct a continuing review and assessment of all functions of the Central Intelligence Agency, and of other executive departments and agencies having such or similar responsibilities in the foreign intelligence and related fields, and shall report thereon to the President each six months or more frequently as deemed appropriate. The Director of Central Intelligence and the heads of other departments and agencies concerned shall make available to the Board any information with respect to foreign intelligence matters which the Board may require for the purpose of carrying out its responsibilities to the President. The information so supplied to the Board shall be afforded requisite security protection as prescribed by the provisions of applicable laws and regulations."

Congress has specific subcommittees to review CIA's activities and provide for its appropriations. These are subcommittees of the Armed Services Committees and the Appropriations Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Presidential Comments

President Truman, in a message he sent 9 June 1964 accompanying his portrait for display at CIA Headquarters, wrote:

“To the Central Intelligence Agency, a necessity to the President of the United States, from one who knows.”

President Eisenhower, speaking on 3 November 1959 on the occasion of the cornerstone laying at CIA's new headquarters building at Langley, Virginia, characterized CIA's work as follows:

“In war nothing is more important to a commander than the facts concerning the strength, dispositions and intentions of his opponent, and the proper interpretation of those facts. In peacetime the necessary facts are of a different nature. They deal with conditions, resources, requirements and attitudes prevailing in the world. They are essential to the development of policy to further our long term national security and best interests. To provide information of this kind is the task of the organization of which you [members of CIA] are a part.

“No task could be more important. Upon the quality of your work depends in large measure the success of our effort to further the nation's position in the international scene.

“By its very nature the work of this agency demands of its members the highest order of dedication, ability, trustworthiness and selflessness — to say nothing of the finest type of courage, whenever needed. Success cannot be advertised: failure cannot be explained. In the work of Intelligence, heroes are undecorated and unsung, often even among their own fraternity. Their inspiration is rooted in patriotism — their reward can be little except the conviction that they are performing a unique and indispensable service for their country, and the knowledge that America needs and appreciates their efforts. I assure you this is indeed true.”

President Kennedy, speaking to the personnel of CIA at its headquarters, Langley, Virginia, on 28 November 1961, said:

"Your successes are unheralded — your failures are trumpeted. . . . But I am sure you realize how important is your work, how essential it is — and in the long sweep of history how significant your efforts will be judged. So I do want to express my appreciation to you now, and I am confident that in the future you will continue to merit the appreciation of our country, as you have in the past."

President Johnson, at the 28 April 1965 swearing-in ceremonies at the White House for the Director and the Deputy Director, said:

"Long ago in the infancy of this nation Americans were told that their liberty and the price of it was eternal vigilance. In this 20th century that truth is stronger than ever. We live in a dangerous world, a world which cannot be predicted, a world which moves and is shaped by great forces, forces which we faithfully believe can serve for good as well as evil.

"We were founded as a nation upon an ideal. All through the ages, Americans have been, first and last, idealists. Of all our generations none ever has been more truly idealistic than Americans of these times — without thought of gain, without thought of conquest, without wish for aggrandizement. We have committed our lives, our property, our resources and our sacred honor to the freedom and peace of other men, indeed to the freedom and peace of all mankind. We would dishonor that commitment, we would disgrace all the sacrifices Americans have made if we were not every hour of every day vigilant against every threat to peace and freedom. This is why we have the Central Intelligence Agency.

"The purpose of this effort like the purpose of all that we do is to strive for an orderly, just and peaceful world. In this effort more than in many others a high order of selflessness, of dedication, of devotion, is asked of men and women. The compensation of them comes not in gain, certainly not in rewards of salary, but the reward of the sure knowledge they have made a contribution to freedom's cause."

Other Information

An Act of Congress (Public Law 88-426, 14 August 1964) establishes the annual salary of the Director of Central Intelligence at \$30,000 and that of the Deputy Director at \$28,500.

The CIA Headquarters building is located in Langley, near McLean, Virginia, 7½ miles from the center of the Nation's Capital. Its post office address is Washington, D.C. 20505.

THE DIRECTORS OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, USNR
23 January 1946 – 7 June 1946

Lieutenant General Hoyt Sanford Vandenberg, USAAF
10 June 1946 – 1 May 1947

Rear Admiral Roscoe Henry Hillenkoetter, USN
1 May 1947 – 7 October 1950

Lieutenant General (later General) Walter Bedell Smith, USA
7 October 1950 – 9 February 1953

Allen Welsh Dulles
26 February 1953 – 29 November 1961

John Alex McCone
29 November 1961 – 28 April 1965

W. F. Raborn
28 April 1965 –

THE DEPUTY DIRECTORS OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Kingman Douglass

1 February 1946 – 11 July 1946

Brigadier General (later Major General) Edwin Kennedy Wright, USA

July 1946 – 10 March 1949

William Harding Jackson

2 October 1950 – 3 August 1951

Allen Welsh Dulles

23 August 1951 – 26 February 1953

Lieutenant General (later General) Charles Pearre Cabell, USAF

23 April 1953 – 31 January 1962

Lieutenant General Marshall Sylvester Carter, USA

3 April 1962 – 28 April 1965

Richard Helms

28 April 1965 –